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INSTRUCTIONS FOR CONTROLLING BATS

Prepared in the Section of Predator and Rodent Control
Division of Game Management

Bats are almost entirely beneficial, but complaints against them are made largely because of the results of their roosting in homes and other occupied buildings. The objection to their presence is due in part also to an aversion that many people have to them, just as they have to snakes, spiders, and rats, but more because of the highly objectionable odor that is always associated with a roost of bats. This pungent, penetrating odor comes from their droppings and urine, which collect rapidly under their roosts and make it necessary to drive them away, to shut them out, or, as a last resort, to kill them. The following control methods are suggested:

It is frequently possible, by the use of naphthalene, to drive bats from their congregating places in attics, double walls, or other enclosed spaces that afford suitable roosting sites. The naphthalene can be purchased at local drug stores either in the flake form or as common "moth balls." The flakes, which are preferable for this purpose, should be thrown liberally around the places occupied. Usually 2 to 5 pounds are required to drive the bats from the average roost in a building. The treatment should be repeated after a week if necessary. The odor of the naphthalene is so objectionable to bats that usually they will leave the premises where it is used.

Bats can sometimes be shut out of an established roost in a building, though this is often difficult, as there are usually many openings through which they can gain entrance. They can be excluded, however, by finding and closing all the openings they use. In blocking such openings, at least one should be left open until after dark, when the bats leave on their nightly search for food. After all the bats are out, the remaining openings should be closed.

Fumigation with calcium cyanide has been effective in destroying the roosts by killing the bats. The gas generated, however, is so deadly that extreme care must be used to avoid endangering human life. The odors created by the bats thus killed also are objectionable. Calcium cyanide in dust or granular form should be inserted into the cavities occupied by the bats. Because of the danger of using the cyanide, however, this method should not be employed when the use of naphthalene as a repellent will answer the purpose or when the bats can be shut out of a building as above described.

